

THE CHINESE IN CALIFORNIA

The Exclusion Act Does Not Work the Results that Were Expected from It.

Effect of Organization Among the Heathen—How the Workers are Hired and Paid, and How Strikes are Started and Managed.

Correspondence New York Evening Post.

The present situation can be briefly stated as follows: Chinese exclusion begins to be felt by all classes of land-holders, but more particularly by the fruit-growers and viticulturists. The statement made about five years ago in the Evening Post that "exclusion" would steadily raise the wages of the Chinese who were left in the State, has proved literally true. It has done more than this—it has developed a remarkable degree of organization among the Chinese. If American workmen are not above learning lessons in such manner, they can gain vastly by a careful study of Chinese strikes and the Chinese system of finding and keeping work. I see no reason why their system would not be a great advantage to agricultural laborers in many other parts of the country besides California.

Let me first explain the manner of Chinese organization. Chinese differ as much one from another as any other class of men. Some are ambitious and energetic, soon get capital, and become leaders. As soon as a Chinaman who shows capacity can get a dozen or more of his fellows to "form a gang," his work as a labor contractor begins. Each man makes a contract with him, to pay him about 10 cents a day; he, on his part, agrees to find them a certain amount of employment. He then goes out among the farmers and "places" them. In a few years a good Chinese boss is able to handle from one hundred to two hundred men, in large and small gangs. He makes written contracts with orchardists, grape-growers and general farmers, and it is absolutely safe to depend upon his faithfulness. I have never yet seen any failure of a Chinese boss to deliver the required labor. Now, the point worth noting about all this is that the men are reliable. A fair wage is paid, and the labor has to be made as a separate bargain, often long and difficult, with each man he hires; he has to explain over and over the work to be done; and, after all, the Chinese are apt to leave in a few days, to look for better wages or easier work. With the Chinese boss it is very different.

"Good morning," the Chinaman says. "You Mr. Smith? How many man want? How long?"

"I want ten men for the season." "All right. Ten men, four months, dollar and a quarter a day. You pay me every month. You sign paper. He come to-morrow."

MANAGING A STRIKE.

They come, board themselves anywhere—in the willows perhaps, making rude huts, or living in some old barn. Whatever their shortcomings are, they are respectful, trustworthy and sober. If any one of the gang is unsatisfactory the boss will send another man in his place. It is easy to see why employers like this system. Fresno grape-growers needed, this year, about six thousand extra men. The Chinese were on hand, well organized, living cheaply in their own peasant way, but they would not go to work until the wages were fixed to suit them. Last year the bosses contracted in every case at \$1.25 a day for each man. This year there was a general strike for \$1.75. In order to make this strike effective all that was needed was the harmony of the thirty or forty Chinese bosses who held by contract all the laborers. They waited until the grapes were nearly ripe; then they made the announcement. The employers tried to bring in white labor and even sent to the mountains for Indians, but in a fortnight they gave up. In two days more the principal vineyarders were supplied, and every wheel of industry in the valley began to move again. According to the system adopted these six thousand men will all find work in the vineyards as soon as they finish in the Fresno vineyards. They will know exactly where to go, for the most interesting system of private intelligence prevails among the Chinese; and, while these large gangs are at work, their bosses are arranging for the clearing of lands, the digging of ditches, and a thousand other things that can be done in the mid-California winters. It is to be noted that this sort of organization renders higher wages possible, and gives the Chinese Chinese every advantage in the strike, for they never stay idle very long. In fact, the usual form of a Chinese strike is something like this:

"This year wages so much. You think too high? All right, we go another job next week. Plenty work."

As a fact, they go to the job if the price is not paid. True, they work for less, perhaps, than before, but they keep busy, and the man who let them go finds it very hard to replace them in time to save his fruit crop. It gives him a good deal of respect for the Chinese bosses. Fresno people tell me that white labor is preferred to many employers there, and that they have learned that the example of the Chinese in the matter of organization will be adopted another year. But I cannot find any evidence as to any particular ground for this easy faith. White labor is, of course, used everywhere to a greater or less extent, but it does not begin to be as desirable as the Chinese, as they are thoroughly welded together for action as are the six thousand Chinese now making Fresno raisins.

To me, at least, the Chinese labor problems of the present time appear very different from the problems of a decade ago, before the multiplied special industries of our horticulture made demand for a flexible labor supply—demands that are entirely beyond the capacities of the ordinary intelligence office. One result of the method is that Chinese laborers travel in great numbers, third-class of course. Up and down the great valleys, into the mountains, and over the deserts to the newly irrigated cases, these patient, industrious people go at the order of the bosses, fulfill their contracts, and turn to new ones.

WHAT THEY DO WITH THEIR MONEY.

Notice in small gangs in the richer valleys, where laborers stay for years in the same district, that the bossship is often an elective office, the men voluntarily choosing one of their number to act as contractor, and paying him a commission. He works with them, and draws his own wages also. Every camp, large or small, purchases with extreme care and economy, assessing each member, and having a weekly cash settlement. It is difficult to determine the amount of savings made by the average Chinese, but a number of them gamble and smoke opium, but the vast majority support families in China or send money there for investment. The other day I met a hard-working Chinaman whom I had known for a long time. He was very communicative, as they always are to those who they think are friendly.

"No more work for boss," he said. "My own boss now, rent vegetable garden. Hire five men all time."

"What do you do with your money?" I asked.

"Me buy land in China. Good land. Last year sent over two thousand dollar to buy more land. Me own two hundred acre there. Bimely go back. Rich man; heap good time there."

This man went back to China eight or ten years ago, married, and has a family. He thinks a great deal of his wife and children, and writes to them regularly. I do not know whether, under different laws and social relations, he would have brought his family to California, and bought land here instead of in China, but certainly not. As I said to a rabid advocate of Chinese exclusion, after speaking of this particular case: "How could he be as safely invest his money in California under present conditions? But it is not a pity that he cannot do so."

There was a time when Chinese merchants bought San Francisco property, but they have stopped doing so. They prefer to lease. It is noticeable all over California, in vegetable-growing, mining, and

whatever industry they undertake that they no longer buy, if any other plan is possible. They send more money back to China now than ever before, and they make fewer permanent investments here. This is another of the prophesied results of the exclusion act. They cannot travel back and forth, so they must make as much money as possible, and then go home for good. I have known of cases where laborers had actually made four visits to China in twenty years, each visit meaning about six months of absence from the United States. Steamship companies have certainly lost considerably by the change.

Exclusion, as men are beginning to see, means a good deal more than men expected it would mean. It is a popular doctrine, but one can easily conceive of labor needs in California that would make a majority of the employers demand more Chinese. The Chinese are not on trial in the matter; the white laborer is the fellow who is being put to the test. Can he compete with the organization of the despised heathen? Only by equally efficient organization and by giving as much work for a dollar as they give.

AFRICAN METHODISTS.

Indiana Conference Begins—The Bishops' Committee—Good Reports from Churches.

The fifty-second session of the Indiana annual conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church convened yesterday morning in Bethel Church, on Vermont street, and was called to order by Bishop John M. Brown, D. D., of Washington, D. C., presiding episcopate of the fourth district, including the States of Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Carolina. The devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. B. F. Lee, D. D., of Philadelphia. The liturgical service of the church was solemnly recited under the conduct of Dr. Lee, in which all joined with impressive effect.

Rev. D. P. Roberts, of Evansville, secretary of the previous conference, was directed to call the roll, at the conclusion of which a quorum was found to be present. Upon the announcement of this fact the election of officers was declared in order, and, after a spirited contest, the following were elected: Secretary, D. P. Roberts, of Evansville; recording secretary, John W. Stanton, of Lafayette; statistical secretary, T. E. Wilson, of Terre Haute; marshals, H. E. Stewart, of Cambridge, and Lewis Pettiford, of Brazil. The conference voted to hold one session daily, commencing at 8 A. M. and closing at 1 P. M., devoting the afternoon to religious services. The bar of the conference was fixed to include the first seven seats in front of the church, reserved for the members and the distinguished visiting standing committees.

On Admissions—D. P. Roberts, Robert McDaniel and Martin Coleman.

On First Year's Studies—H. H. Thompson, Jason Benly and John W. Harper.

On Second Year's Studies—Alexander Smith, The Price and A. Mason.

On Third Year's Studies—James A. Davis, John W. Stanton and Johnson Mitchell.

On Fourth Year's Studies—John H. Clay, P. M. Lewis, T. E. Wilson, James Simpson and H. H. Wilson.

On Public Worship—John H. Clay, James A. Davis, John White and Wm. Townsend.

On Finance—John H. Clay, Jesse Bass and J. W. Harper.

On Dollar Cause—James A. Davis, J. W. Harper and Martin Coleman.

On Education Department—The Price, Louis Rattiff and John W. Stanton.

On Episcopal Resolutions—D. P. Roberts, H. H. Thompson, Johnson Mitchell, Jesse Bass and J. H. Clay.

To Hold Missionary Money—Louis Rattiff.

To Hold Missionary Money—S. M. Smothers.

To Hold Educational Money—Johnson Bardeen.

On Pastoral Letter—Johnson Mitchell, Jesse Bass, S. M. Smothers.

The financial and statistical reports of the ministers in their different charges were read for about the result about the African Methodists have been running their church government. The dollar money in the reports is \$1 on each member to the general fund of the church, such as paying the salaries of the bishops, supporting the educational institutions, learning the sustaining the official work, and living the widows of deceased ministers, assisting superannuated preachers, and for other purposes. The following are some of the principal items in the report of the pastors:

Lafayette, John W. Stanton, Pastor—Forty-six members; dollar money, \$135; salary, \$4,000; education, \$2,100; for missions, \$2,500; paid on church debt, \$500; total collections for all purposes, \$207.00; over, \$207.00.

On State of the Church—Alexander Smith, John W. Stanton and Theo. Price.

On State of the Church—Morris Lewis and Jesse Bass.

On Missions—H. H. Wilson, A. L. Murry, and James Furkison.

On Judiciary—Morris Lewis, W. R. Hutchison, Theo. Price, Alex. Smith, and John W. Stanton.

On Memorial—Alex. Smith, Lewis Pettiford and John Coleman.

On Bible Cause—James A. Davis, J. W. Harper and Martin Coleman.

On Education Department—The Price, Louis Rattiff and John W. Stanton.

On Episcopal Resolutions—D. P. Roberts, H. H. Thompson, Johnson Mitchell, Jesse Bass and J. H. Clay.

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love thee, Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep." The theme discussed was the duty of the ministry, which was impressively outlined. It was a sermon to the preachers as to their duties and responsibilities. The speaker did himself and the subject justice. After the sermon Rev. Jesse Bass, assisted by others, consecrated the emblems and the holy communion was administered with solemn ceremonies to the members of the conference and the congregation.

Last night there was a representative congregation assembled to hear the educational sermon which was delivered by Rev. P. M. Lewis, of Richmond, from Proverbs iv, 7: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding." He spoke forcibly of the value of education in general, and its people of African descent in particular, and declared hopefully of the prospects of the future. The substantial results already attained with much pride, Dr. L. J. Coppin made some remarks in advising the people to make their education as thorough as possible. Dr. Lee, who presided at the meeting, followed with some practical remarks on education and paid high compliments to Bishop B. A. Payne, the senior episcopate of the church, for having pressed the people of African descent into the higher pursuits of education.

Hon. James M. Townsend thrilled the congregation by some excellent advice as to the best means to utilize their efforts in fostering education—that they should concentrate their power on one institution rather than trying to sustain several in different localities.

TRUE TO HIS FIRST LOVE.

A Poor German Becomes Suddenly Rich and Marries His Cotton-Field Companion.

ATLANTA, Ga., Sept. 23.—There settled near Austell a poor German named Richard Hornig, an honest and hard-working farm laborer. He received but little attention from the girls in the settlement, but there was one poor girl, Miss O'Shields, who was always kind and attentive to the stranger, and their friendship soon ripened into love, but as both were very poor matrimony was not thought of. Like Hornig, Miss O'Shields had to work in the cotton-fields. She was uneducated, but quite pretty and had a quick, bright mind.

A few months since a letter from Germany arrived for Hornig, which announced to him the death of his father, and that he was sole heir to \$50,000 mark, nearly \$750,000. Mr. Hornig visited Germany, had no trouble getting his fortune, and returned to Austell last week a rich man. This change in his circumstances has made a marked change also in the reception accorded him. But his heart was still true to the little maiden who had been his friend while he was a poor stranger in a strange land, so he made her his wife to-day. Miss O'Shields was taken from the cotton field and sent to live with her new husband, surrounded by all the luxuries that wealth could buy. Her husband says that he intends to send her to the best schools in the old world and give her a liberal education to fit her for the new life and society that her changed condition will necessitate.

When asked why he did not marry an educated girl, Mr. Hornig replied that such showed him no attention when they thought him a penniless stranger, and under such circumstances he would always feel that his wife married him for his money and position. He knew the bride he had chosen loved him for his money, and this was worth more to him than erudition.

Always Kicking.

The man who begged for a cigar to go with his match is outdone by the Democrat who gets twenty-one pounds of sugar for the price formerly paid for fourteen pounds, and then kicks because Mason fruit jars are not thrown in to complete the bargain.

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